



Testimony of AARP Connecticut in **Support of SB 1178,**
An Act Expanding Connecticut Paid Sick Days
Labor Committee Public Hearing, March 9, 2023

Good afternoon, Senator Kushner, Representative Sanchez, Ranking Members, and Members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee:

AARP is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization with nearly 38 million members nationwide and 600,000 here in Connecticut. We advocate on behalf of issues that are important to older adults and their loved ones, and we appreciate the opportunity to share our support for SB 1178 as well as our significant concerns with Section 2(i) of the bill.

Yesterday, AARP released a new report, “Valuing the Invaluable: 2023 Update” that examines the role of family caregivers in our nation’s long-term services and supports system and estimates the economic value of family caregivers’ unpaid contributions. Nationwide, an estimated 38 million family caregivers provide care work \$600 billion each year; in Connecticut, we have an estimated 420,000 providing unpaid care that would be valued at approximately \$7.2 billion if it were compensated.¹

This report is relevant to SB 1178 because having access to paid leave for caregiving is a critical component of labor force participation. This is especially true for women because the work of caring for loved ones disproportionately falls on them. Connecticut’s current paid sick law does not include workers who work at a small business with fewer than 50 employees, those in jobs that do not meet the statutory definition of “service worker,” part-time workers or those with multiple jobs, and workers who provide care for loved ones other than a child or spouse. SB 1178 would allow all workers, regardless of employer size or industry, to have access to paid sick days to care either for themselves or for family members, which is defined broadly and inclusively in the legislation.

SB 1178 would help the 60% of family caregivers who juggle work and caregiving. Career disruptions and breaks due to caregiving can lead to substantial economic risk and even long-term financial struggles for caregivers. The expanded definition of “family member” in Section 1 of the bill would allow many more family caregivers to use paid sick days to care for ill or injured family members. Only 12% of unpaid caregivers who care for an adult loved one care for a spouse, and 6% care for an adult child with disabilities or serious illness. The new definition of “family member” would expand access to paid sick leave benefits to the 50% of

¹ <https://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/ppi/2023/3/valuing-the-invaluable-2023-update.doi.10.26419-2Fppi.00082.006.pdf>

caregivers who care for a parent or parent-in-law, the 8% who care for a grandparent or grandparent-in-law, the 7% who care for a sibling or sibling-in-law, the 6% who care for another relative, and (potentially) some the 10% that care for a close non-relative.²

While we support SB 1178, we do have critical concerns about Section 2(i) of the bill, which would establish the Personal Care Attendant Workforce Council as the employer of any personal care attendants. This runs counter to the underlying principle of the PCA waiver program, which is that the disabled individual who receives care through the program is the employer of the personal care attendant. They are responsible for hiring and training PCAs and assuming other employer responsibilities. In addition, the PCA Workforce Council is a voluntary board, and acting as an employer is beyond the scope of the Council's duties as described in Sec. 17b-706a of the Connecticut General Statutes. Further, Sec. 17b-706b explicitly states that PCAs shall not be considered state employees; Section 2(i) would muddy these waters. We strongly urge the Committee to eliminate this section from the bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our support and concerns about SB 1178.

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² <https://www.caregiving.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/full-report-caregiving-in-the-united-states-01-21.pdf>